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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

# Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000

## Report of the Secretary-General

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# I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since the endorsement of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 1/ by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/108 of 13 December 1985, the Secretary-General has annually presented a report to the Assembly on the implementation of the Strategies. In its resolution 48/108 of 20 December 1993, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session on measures taken to implement the provisions of the resolution.

2. The present report has been prepared on the basis of contributions from and in consultation with the organizations of the United Nations system.

3. A report on the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in Beijing from 4-15 September 1995, including information on measures to implement the provisions of resolution 48/108 related to the Conference, is being submitted separately.

# II. PRIORITY THEMES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AT ITS THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

4. In its resolution 48/108, paragraph 19, the General Assembly requested to include in the present report an assessment of recent developments that are relevant to the priority themes to be considered at the subsequent session of the Commission and to transmit to the Commission a summary of relevant views expressed by delegations during the debate in the Assembly.

## A. Equality: women and economic decision-making

5. The first review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in 1990 emphasized the importance of women in the labour force contrasted with their lack of full participation in economic decision-making. In recommendation IV, arising from the first review and contained in paragraph 5 of the annex to its resolution 1990/15, the Economic and Social Council stated that Governments, non-governmental organizations and private sector enterprises should take special measures to increase the proportion of women involved in economic decision-making, including studies on the incidence of women in economic decision-making positions in the public and private sectors, the promotion of training programmes, analysis of alternative policies to provide women with careers leading to economic decision-making, and the adjustment of national legislation.

6. It was also recommended that the United Nations should study the incidence of women in economic decision-making worldwide, analyse innovative national programmes to increase the proportion of women in economic decision-making positions and publicize the results, within existing resources. As an integral part of the focus of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on equality of opportunity and treatment between men and women in the world of work, it has

conducted a number of studies, publications and seminars on women in economic decision-making as well as analysis of affirmative action and other innovative national programmes to increase women's proportion in economic decision-making positions.

7. The issue of women in economic decision-making and its relationship to the global advancement of women have received less attention than the role of women in politics and governmental policy-making. For this reason, the Commission on the Status of Women has made "Women and Economic Decision-Making" a priority theme for its thirty-ninth session in March 1995.

8. While there are no regular global statistics published on the proportion of women in top-level economic decision-making positions in the private sector, studies have been conducted by the Division for the Advancement of Women in order to provide estimates. Research results suggest that the proportion of women in economic decision-making roles in the private sector, on average, is more or less the same as the percentage in the public sector.

9. Data for the last twenty years indicate that both the proportion of women in the labour force relative to men and the rate of growth in female employment have increased. These trends apply to most regions and economic sectors. More and more women are studying at the tertiary educational level, significantly narrowing the gap with men, and are entering male-dominated fields of education. Despite the trends in employment and education, women are still excluded from top managerial and executive positions in both the private and public sectors where important economic decisions are made. This trend applies to all levels, international, regional and national.

10. In the 1,000 largest corporations based outside of the United States, only 1 per cent of executive positions are currently held by women, according to the study prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women. In the 1,000 largest corporations in the United States, the proportion is higher, at 8 per cent, with concentrations of women executives in wholesale and retail trade. Few women hold the top-most corporate positions, either in the United States or elsewhere. A contrasting set of cases comes from the Scandinavian countries. In the Nordic countries women have made significant advances in political and governmental decision-making, while they have lagged behind in climbing the corporate ladder and in the area of economic decision-making. This indicates that corporate culture is more conservative in Scandinavian countries than in the United States and that affirmative action programmes have been targeted towards the public sector in Scandinavia while affirmative action programmes have been targeted towards the private sector and non-decision-making positions in the public sector in the United States.

11. An important issue which needs to be addressed is the extent to which management institutions have or have not responded to the career needs of women in economic decision-making by providing training to women in managerial roles to improve their entry into and effectiveness in managerial positions and to strengthen their capacity therein. A large ILO project on "Programme to strengthen training institutions in Africa", which covered 15 management development institutions in francophone and anglophone Africa, had a component on women in management which examined the above issue. It observed, inter alia,

that conceptual inputs and a managerial orientation congruent with national, social, cultural and organizational realities are essential for management institutions to conduct meaningful research, training and consultancies for enterprises. Training for women managers based on such knowledge would ensure the development of their professionalism, work ethos and managerial orientation grounded in the reality of formal organizations and their specific socio-cultural contexts. 2/

12. The participation of women in top public and private management positions, in business enterprises, and the executive committees of trade unions and professional organizations is a relatively new phenomenon. The proportion of women in economic decision-making is very low and is increasing at a far slower rate than trends in employment and education.

13. The same is true for the web of powerful global and regional multilateral institutions which regulate and supervise international currencies, trade and investment. Women have been virtually excluded from key decision-making positions and from negotiating roles in these international economic forums. Similarly, the proportion of women in national trade policy is insignificant. Consequently, a gender dimension has been absent from macroeconomic policies and decisions regarding resource distribution, wealth creation and exchange.

14. Even in professions which remain predominantly female, women remain subordinate to men in decision-making. For instance, female nurses remain largely subordinated to male doctors and hospital administrators. Women in education are clustered in positions at pre-school and primary levels and primarily teach languages and humanities, rather than in more valued technical fields like mathematics, science, economics and engineering. Within the education hierarchy, men fill the higher ranking positions.

15. Many factors account for the apparent "glass ceiling" which restricts women's upward mobility. Gender bias is embedded in employment, training and promotion rules and procedures, administrative regulations, and performance evaluation. These are formulated to provide advantages to men as both employers and employees, and they are unfavourable to women and their needs. A widespread and pervasive "male corporate culture" propagates sexual harassment, denial of career development opportunities for women, their exclusion from networks, and the under- or non-valuation of women's qualifications and skills.

16. However, in many countries, women, including the elderly, are making advances in economic decision-making through entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises. Women face less barriers in entrepreneurship than in large corporate structures, and they are better able to fulfil the need for a flexible work environment.

17. Since 1982, the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT (ITC), the focal point in the United Nations system for technical cooperation with developing countries for trade promotion and export development, has made efforts to integrate women's issues and, subsequently, a gender perspective in its technical cooperation activities. One of ITC's priorities in trade promotion and export development has been to increase women's participation and decision-making in foreign trade. ITC's experience since 1982 clearly demonstrates that

women play a critical role in the development process and that the female business community can be effectively mobilized and integrated into the mainstream trade development process.

18. The ITC recommends that the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies should include reference to the role of women in external trade, including international, cross-border and regional trade and proposals for enhancing women's participation and economic decision-making in these areas.

19. The external trade sector can play a catalytic role in sustainable social and economic development. Consequently, the trade dimension needs to be integrated into gender-based development strategies and programmes. The multi-sectoral nature of economic development requires interaction between production and trade of the national, subregional and regional levels. Given the objective of raising productivity and income of women entrepreneurs, backward and forward linkages are required between demand (markets for goods and services) and factors of production (labour and capital).

20. In many developing countries, particularly low-income and the least-developed countries, local economic and market conditions do not always allow an expansion in output. The reasons include lack of access to the means of production and the limited purchasing power of consumers, especially in rural areas. A sustainable solution is to link production to export market opportunities at the subregional, regional and global levels and producing goods and services which meet subsequent demand.

21. Apart from the issue of increasing women's participation in the executive committees of trade unions, it is also necessary to enhance women's representation in the decision-making organs of chambers of commerce and other employers associations.

22. With respect to women's participation in leadership positions in trade unions, the ILO has recently collected data from various regions as part of its interdepartmental project on women. The data indicate that, while women continue to be underrepresented in union leadership positions, some progress has been achieved in recent years. Women are better-represented in local level union leadership positions rather than at the national level. Furthermore, the leadership positions held by women tend to be in peripheral rather than core union activities which do not lead to career advancement. 3/

23. These issues will be discussed at a forthcoming expert group meeting on "Women and Economic Decision-Making", being organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women to take place from 7-11 November 1994. The results and recommendations will be presented to the Commission on the Status of Women in 1995 and will be included in the draft Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

B. Development: promotion of literacy, education and training, including technological skills

24. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies recognized education as the basis for the full promotion and improvement of the status of women (para. 163). The World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, drew attention to the gender gap in educational opportunities and its consequences for human development. The Convention against Discrimination in Education (Paris, 1960) and article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Assembly resolution 34/180, annex) recognizes equal rights for girls to education, including the right to compulsory and free primary education and universal access to secondary, vocational and higher education.

25. The first review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in 1990 emphasized the importance of women in education. In recommendation III, arising from the first review and contained in paragraph 4 of the annex to its resolution 1990/15, the Economic and Social Council stated that in the area of education, both formal and non-formal, governments should promote the training of teachers on gender issues, co-education and professional counselling. Governments should complete the revision of textbooks expeditiously, if possible by 1995, in accordance with national law and practice, in order to eliminate sex-biased presentations. Women's access to decision-making in the media could be a way to combat stereotyping of women. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is organizing an international symposium on "Women and the Media: Access to expression and to decision-making" to be held in Toronto, Canada on 28 February-3 March 1995.

26. It was also recommended that Governments, non-governmental organizations, women's groups and all other entities concerned should take steps to amend formal and informal educational systems at all levels to promote change in the psychological, social and traditional practices that are the foundation of the de facto obstacles to women's progress.

27. It was further recommended that the United Nations Secretariat, UNESCO and other appropriate organizations of the United Nations system should continue to analyse the extent and effects of stereotyping of women and implement innovative programmes to combat it.

28. In recommendation X, the Economic and Social Council stated that Governments that have not already done so should reorient resources to ensure women's equal access to education and training at all levels and in all fields and, in collaboration with women's groups and non-governmental organizations, should make special efforts to remove all gender-related differences in adult literacy by the year 2000. Programmes should be established to ensure that parents and teachers provide equal educational opportunities for girls and boys. In particular, encouragement should be given to promoting the study by girls of scientific and technological subjects, particularly those corresponding to national development priorities, and to preparing girls for full participation in the economy and public life.

29. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) stresses that major efforts should be made and effective incentives created to increase women's access to education and training in the fields of science and technology. The Expert Group Meeting on "Women's Science and Technology", convened by UNIFEM in December 1993 at the request of the secretariat for the Fourth World Conference on Women, recommended that Governments should be encouraged to set quotas for women at all levels in science and education to ensure that a critical mass of 30 per cent of professional women scientists and technologists is achieved. In order to encourage girls and young women to enter science education, efforts should be made to de-mystify science and technology, to develop gender-neutral science curricula, and to promote images of women in scientific and technical professions and fields. Increased women's participation in science and technology could shift the mainstream towards being more people-centred and more focused on basic needs and sustainable development.

30. It was further recommended that UNESCO and other organizations of the United Nations system should give pricrity to eliminating female illiteracy and to monitoring efforts to ensure that women have equal access to all levels of education and training. UNESCO has organized, in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a Pan-African Conference on the education of girls held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 28 March-1 April 1993. This Conference marked another milestone in regional efforts to make education for all a reality in terms of quality, access and management. The main objectives of the Conference were to obtain a regional consensus on girls education as priority for education development in Africa. The Conference adopted the Ouagadougou Declaration which calls upon Governments, international and bilateral agencies, NGOs and politicians to establish the education of girls as a priority, to set targets and to report regularly to the international Forum on Education for All (EFA). In the Delhi Declaration (16 December 1993), the leaders of nine high-population developing nations reaffirmed their commitment to EFA goals by, inter alia, recognizing that "the education and empowerment of girls and women are important goals in themselves and are key factors in contributing to social development, well-being and the education of present and future generations, and the expansion of the choices available to women for the development of their full potential" (paras. 2-6).

31. In recommendation XI of the Economic and Social Council (E/1990/INF/6), paragraph 14, it was stated that Governments should take particular steps to ensure that new technologies are accessible to women.

32. While there is broad recognition that the education of women and girls is a principal, cost-effective factor in human resource development, the issue has not been studied in depth by the Commission on the Status of Women. At the thirty-ninth session of the Commission in March 1995, the promotion of literacy, education and training, including technological skills, will be the priority theme, as identified in the Commission's long-term work plan.

33. Education can be a change agent empowering women and girls of all ages. For many girls and women, school or literacy classes may provide the only opportunity for exposure to a wider world and for contact with a non-family institution, thereby giving social status and self-esteem. Education enhances the ability of women to express their demands and aspirations as well as to

negotiate to secure their needs. Educated women are more likely to participate in politics and in civil society and to know and exercise their legal rights.

34. Recent educational data reflect the significant changes that have occurred over the last two decades. While improvement is being achieved in the enrolment of both girls and boys in primary education, girls continue to lag behind boys in both enrolment and retention. Access to and retention in primary education for girls remains an especially serious problem in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Middle East. In particular, progress in the primary school enrolment rate in the least developed countries has been significantly lower, and the drop-out rate considerably higher than in the developing countries as a whole. Differences remain between girls and boys in achievement levels and retention rates. As a result of past discrimination that kept girls from attending school, the literacy rate of adult women, particularly in rural areas, is also inferior to that of men in nearly all developing countries.

35. Governments are cognizant of the disparities in schooling levels between boys and girls, as indicated by findings on enrolment differentials at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. While significant progress has been made in gathering gender-disaggregated statistics, data are generally limited to the formal educational system. Some Governments have promoted policies and strategies to improve educational opportunities for girls, and efforts have been made to attract girls into scientific and technological fields.

36. Both literacy and basic education for all, as well as technical and vocational education for girls and women are of great concern. The educational content should reflect the needs, interests and aspirations of girls and women, and stimulate their creative and entrepreneurial potential. Particular incentives are needed in curricula, teaching materials and teacher training, with regard to role models and classroom situations to ensure that both boys and girls are emancipated from stereotyped roles and expectations. Strategies need to be developed which will result in the employment of more female teachers at the secondary, vocational, technical and university levels.

37. The rationale for girls' and adult women's education includes the effects of improved ability to choose the number and timing of births, lower fertility, improved family and reproductive health, lower infant mortality and increased prosperity in the household. Mothers who are educated are likely to pass their education and its benefits on to future generations, particularly to their daughters and granddaughters.

38. Given the importance of girls' schooling and literacy training for adult women, it is imperative to develop strategies for closing the gender gap and providing women with the knowledge and skills necessary to cope with changing socio-economic conditions. Special literacy programmes that cater to the needs of women, especially rural women, should be promoted. Measures should be taken to ensure wide dispersal of educational facilities across geographical space, at least up to the secondary school level, so that access of all women living in remote and rural areas is fostered. This is particularly important for the least developed countries where the gender gap in education is much more pronounced than developing countries as a whole. With regard to strategies for closing the gender gap, cross-country data suggest that female teachers can draw

more girls into school, even in a co-educational setting. To this end, strategies to reduce the gender gap at the country level should also include initiatives to increase the number of female teachers in educational projects. These strategies must also deal with the quality of education as well as its financing. Cost-sharing should be developed between the public and private sector; government (the public sector) should honour its commitment to equity in education ensuring that girls and women receive the support needed to enable them to participate. The evidence indicates prioritized increase in gender inequity. Work study programmes and available apprenticeships with commercial firms should be developed, using and promoting new technologies.

39. Making technology more accessible to women involves the dissemination of information on relevant and available technologies, training requirements for such technologies as well as non-discriminatory credit schemes which enable women to acquire new and appropriate technology. This is particularly important for many women entrepreneurs who own and operate small- and medium-scale production units. Women and girls should be encouraged and given access to training in non-traditional areas such as housing construction and related technical fields such as plumbing and electrical training. The promotion of this kind of training should be supported by the development of job opportunities for women within these non-traditional sectors and by an active search for competent women instructors as well as apprentices.

40. Programmes should be developed to guarantee the safety of all children at school as well as safe passage to and from school. Adequate nutrition for all students should be met through school lunch programmes.

41. Literacy and numeracy are vital for the advancement of rural women. Community development workers should be trained to teach literacy, numeracy as well as preventive health and agricultural techniques, along with other subjects found to be needed and appropriate.

42. Although women are increasingly entering traditionally male-dominated fields, only a small proportion of women complete advanced technical training. Equal opportunity for vocational training should be provided to women, including disabled women and girls, to enable full development of their potential.

43. These issues are being discussed at an expert group meeting on gender and education and training organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, from 10-14 October 1994. The results and recommendations will be presented to the Commission on the Status of Women in 1995 and will be included in the draft Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women. UNESCO is preparing a global framework for action in support of girls' and women's education. Furthermore, UNESCO is organizing a consultation on education for development for women and out-of-school girls in the LDCs which will take place in Paris in February/March 1995.

### C. Peace: women in international decision-making

44. The first review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in 1990 emphasized the importance of women in international decision-making. In

recommendation VI, arising from the first review and contained in paragraph 7 of the annex to its resolution 1990/15, the Economic and Social Council stated that all civil service regulations should have clear statements on practices of recruitment, appointment, promotion and leave entitlements, training and development and other conditions of service.

45. The Economic and Social Council also recommended that Governments, political parties, trade unions and professional and other representative groups should each aim at targets to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions to at least 30 per cent by 1995, with a view to achieving equal representation between women and men by the year 2000, and should institute recruitment and training programmes to prepare women for those positions.

46. It was further recommended that Governments, political parties, trade unions and women's organizations should be encouraged to establish a list of qualified women which could be used to fill vacant positions. The importance of training women in the skills necessary for political and administrative careers should also be recognized.

47. The Economic and Social Council also recommended that the United Nations Secretariat, in cooperation with other institutions and in collaboration with Governments, should further develop and disseminate an accessible database on the composition of the highest decision-making bodies at the national, regional and international levels, disaggregated by sex. The United Nations system could assist national Governments to set up such databases.

48. The Division for the Advancement of Women has developed the above-referenced information on women and international decision-making. The information is being included in the Women's Indicators and Statistics Data Base (WISTAT) and presented in The World's Women: Trends and Statistics.

49. The first review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in 1990 emphasized the importance of women in international decision-making. In recommendation XX, arising from the first review and contained in paragraph 22 of the annex to its resolution 1990/15, the Economic and Social Council stated that Governments should be encouraged to increase the participation of women in the peace process at the decision-making level, including them as part of delegations to negotiate international agreements relating to peace and development and disarmament and establishing a target for the number of women participating in such delegations.

50. The issue of women and international decision-making is part of a broader problem of equal participation of women in the decision-making process which has been discussed by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1989, 1990, 1992 and 1993, as well as in expert group meetings in 1989 and 1991. The outcomes of those discussions and research show that the proportion of women active in legislatures, political parties, trade unions and non-governmental organizations does not reflect their numbers in the electorate nor their role in securing national independence and reconstruction, and contribution to socio-economic development. It also demonstrates women's almost complete exclusion from the ranks of senior decision makers in Governments and national administrative and political structures, especially in the area of peace and security, where

women's activism at the grass-roots level and intellectual contribution to peace research stand in sharp contrast to their absence at the highest echelons of power.

51. UNESCO is preparing, in the framework of its contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women, a High Level Consultation on "Women's Contribution to the Culture of Peace", planned to take place in May/June 1995, the results of which will be brought to Beijing.

52. Obstacles and barriers to women's participation have been discussed, and measures for improvement suggested. An important conclusion derived from the meetings was that, if women act in solidarity and achieve a "critical mass" of at least 30 per cent in decision-making bodies, they can make a significant impact on the content of decisions, public agendas and political priorities, and they can make the political process more open and participatory. Closing the gender gap in international decision-making bodies also requires appropriate recommendations in policy formulation to enable women to access decision-making positions and the establishment of a targeted recruitment and career development strategy for women. Efforts continue in order to sensitize women graduates to the social, human and professional roles and responsibilities they should be able to assume at all levels.

53. Statistics show that women are largely excluded from decision-making positions in peace and security matters at the national level and at the international level, including the United Nations system. In delegations to the United Nations in New York in 1994, for example, only 22 per cent of the diplomatic staff and only 5 per cent of delegates holding ambassadorial ranks were women. In the missions of 67 Member States there were no women at all. In the United Nations Secretariat, while 31 per cent overall of the professional staff were women, the percentage in senior management only reached 13 per cent. The proportion was lower in departments concerned with peace and security. By giving greater priority to the recruitment and promotion of women, according to established targets and through the implementation of an action programme, the United Nations could serve as a model for change. Research is needed on the obstacles to women's integration into United Nations posts. Improvements can be made through active monitoring by women at the United Nations and by Governments and NGOs. Women should be informed of prevailing quotas and they should work with their own Governments to redress non-compliance. Without the incorporation of action-oriented strategies to advance the status of women in all United Nations agencies, the Organization runs the risk of sending mixed signals to Member States about the commitment of the United Nations regarding the advancement of women.

54. This exclusion has negative consequences. Not only are international norms of equality not achieved, but the world community and individual nations are deprived of the distinct contributions which women could make to the resolution of global problems and international disputes. There is some evidence that, for example, the effectiveness of peace and security operations with a significant civilian component may be enhanced if there is a balance of women and men in the staffing at all levels.

55. The development of accepted doctrine about peace and security has occurred with little participation of women. There are some indications that had women been involved, different priorities might have been set and different approaches suggested. The implementation of the agenda for peace, it can be argued, could benefit from a gender perspective. Young women should be particularly encouraged to prepare for decision-making positions in the international arena.

56. These issues will be discussed at an expert group meeting on women and international decision-making, organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women, to be held tentatively from 5-9 December 1994. The results and recommendations will be presented to the Commission on the Status of Women in 1995 and will be included in the draft Platform for Action for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

## III. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 48/108 ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

### A. Cooperation by the organizations of the United Nations system with the Commission on the Status of Women on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies

57. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 48/108, the General Assembly reaffirmed the central role of the Commission on the Status of Women in matters related to the advancement of women, and called upon it to continue promoting the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies to the Year 2000, based on the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace and the subtheme "Employment, health and education", and urged all relevant bodies of the United Nations system to cooperate with the Commission in this task.

58. The eighteenth ad hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women was convened on 3-4 March 1994, prior to the thirty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Discussions centred on preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, in particular the preparatory process at the national, regional and global levels, the Platform for Action, and the second Review and Appraisal of the progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. A joint statement on the Platform for Action for the Conference was prepared and delivered by the 31 organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system at the thirty-eighth session of the Commission. Particular emphasis was placed on the need to have processes, institutional arrangements and financial resources for addressing women's concerns that remain sustainable beyond the Fourth World Conference. It was acknowledged that the Platform for Action should set in motion and ensure, in the long term, the shaping and implementation of a gender-sensitive Agenda for Development.

59. The eighteenth ad hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women, as well as the Commission on the Status of Women, have also acknowledged the need for both the Platform for Action and the Fourth World Conference on Women to specifically address issues relating to the status, role, conditions, constraints and

potential of rural women as major producers in the agricultural sector of developing countries. The pervasive poverty of women in the rural sector is exacerbated by increasing migration and increasing productive responsibilities induced by development programmes and national needs for food security. The issues were said to be crucial for the Conference as a specific item for consideration.

60. Proposals were put forward to the Administrative Committee on Coordination concerning the possibility of a regular status for the ad hoc inter-agency meeting as part of the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the inclusion of a gender perspective in any efforts of the United Nations to prepare an Agenda for Development. Also discussed were the preparations of reports for the priority themes for the Commission on the Status of Women (1995) and the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development.

### B. Contributions to forthcoming major international conferences

61. In paragraph 6 of resolution 48/108, the General Assembly requested the Commission, when considering the priority theme relating to development during its thirty-eighth and subsequent sessions, to ensure its early contribution to the preparatory work for forthcoming major international conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in 1995, and the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995, and to address the impact of technologies on women.

62. During its thirty-eighth session in March 1994, the Commission dealt with population issues in its priority theme under the rubric of development. The Commission's discussions drew on the results of a series of expert group meetings convened for the International Conference on Population and Development that have gender dimensions, including one meeting expressly devoted to population and women. The results of the Commission's deliberations on the theme have been made available for the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo. In addition, the Commission adopted resolution 38/6 (see E/1994/27, chap. I, sect. C) on gender equality in population programmes.

63. In the resolution, the Commission reaffirmed the goal of universal access to safe motherhood (prenatal care, childbirth and child development), to family planning and reproductive health services and facilities for those who wish to use them, to assistance in preventing and overcoming infertility, and to full and timely information about all aspects of reproductive health and sexuality.

64. The Commission also reaffirmed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 4/ and the principle that men and women have, on the basis of equality, the same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise those rights.

65. During preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, a link will be established to other major international events planned for 1995 and 1996

including the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the World Summit for Social Development, the United Nations Year for Tolerance in 1995, and the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. Habitat II, to be held in Istanbul in 1996, will provide an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the decision-making role of women within the human settlement process globally, especially in developing countries. Interrelated themes such as the role of women in global governance, democracy and social and economic development will be introduced on the agenda of all the above events. In this context, special focus is to be placed on rural women during the Fourth World Conference on Women, which should result in the formulation of resolutions for endorsement by United Nations agencies and Governments.

66. UNIFEM submitted a position paper to the Second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development, as a contribution to addressing the issues of poverty alleviation, productive employment and social integration from a gender perspective. The Summit will serve as bridge between two global conferences of critical importance for the achievement of gender equality, namely the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (WCW). For the ICPD, UNIFEM efforts are aimed at bringing visibility to the critical linkages between women's economic roles and population policies.

67. During its thirty-eighth session, the Commission adopted resolution 38/5 (see E/1994/27, chap. I, sect. C) on women and development. In the resolution, it urged that Governments foster women's full and equal participation in the elaboration, planning, execution and evaluation of development policies and projects so that they can be the agents and beneficiaries of development.

68. During its third session, held from 26 April to 6 May 1994 in Vienna, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice adopted resolution 3/1. The Commission took into consideration the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, General Assembly resolution 48/110 of 20 December 1993 on violence against women migrant workers, Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/26 of 27 July 1993 on violence against women in all its forms, and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/46 of 8 March 1993.

69. Paragraph 7 of resolution 3/1 invites both the proposed special rapporteurs and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women to cooperate with the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the discharge of its functions and to attend the fourth session of the Commission.

70. In paragraph 12 it requested the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders to consider, as separate items, the issues of violence against women and violence against children within the discussions under topic four and in the context of the Workshop on the Prevention of Violent Crime and to proposed recommendations to the Commission in respect of legislation, procedures, policies, practices and technical cooperation and assistance, as well as social services, education and information on this issue.

71. In paragraph 13 it decided to continue its consideration of the question at its fourth session by having its in-session working group examine, as separate items, the issues of violence against women and violence against children in their crime prevention and criminal justice aspects and, more particularly, specific measures which can be taken in this respect, in the light of the international instruments referred to above and the recommendations of the Ninth Congress.

72. Finally, in paragraph 14 it invited the United Nations interregional, regional and affiliated institutes to undertake activities on issues relating to violence against women and children and to submit a report to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its fifth session on practical measures that could be taken in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice to combat violence against women and children.

### C. Women with special needs: disabled, elderly, migrant and refugee women

73. In paragraph 10 of its resolution 48/108, the General Assembly strongly urged that particular attention be given by the competent United Nations organizations and Governments to the special needs of women with disabilities, elderly women and also women in vulnerable situations such as migrant and refugee women and children.

74. The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 48/96, annex), indicates that special attention should be directed towards women with disabilities in education (Rule 6) as well as in family life and personal integrity (Rule 9) in which context "States should promote measures to change negative attitudes towards marriage, sexuality and parenthood ... especially of girls and women with disabilities". The report of the United Nations Seminar on Disabled Women, held in Vienna from 20-24 August 1990, provides a guide, through its recommendations for action in 22 subject areas, for States and organizations attempting to improve the status of disabled women.

75. Women with disabilities frequently experience dual discrimination: first, because of their sex and second, because of their disability. This discrimination affects all aspects of their lives: education, employment, economic status, marriage and the family, and health care. Equality of opportunity and treatment in employment is a fundamental principle and a basic human right that must apply to all women. In view of this discrimination, the ILO has undertaken measures to promote change by providing women with disabilities greater access to training and employment. In this context, a subregional project for southern Africa has increased the role and visibility of the disabled in mainstream women's organizations and has also created income-generating opportunities for them.

76. Widespread social change has created the preconditions in a number of countries for significant advances in the status of women. Improvements in those countries serve to highlight the neglect of particularly disadvantaged groups of women throughout the region. Of special concern is the lack of social

protection for girls and women among persons with disabilities, international labour migrants and refugees. Of women who are at risk of violence, girls and women with disabilities are the most vulnerable. Emphasis should be given to support self-help organizations and to the participation of girls and women with disabilities in education, training, technical exchange and poverty alleviation programmes. Attention should be paid to issues such as the projected increases in the number of elderly women, as well as the need for equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women for the care of elderly and disabled members.

77. The Proclamation on Ageing, adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 47/5, annex) urges that, in the context of national cultures and conditions, "policies and programmes are developed which respond to the special characteristics, needs and abilities of older women" and that "older women are given adequate support for their largely unrecognized contributions to the economy and the well-being of society". The global targets on ageing for the year 2001 (A/47/339), adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 47/86), calls for special attention to be given to older women in national income-security schemes or strategies. The Third Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing (E/CN.5/1993/7) noted that over two thirds of the countries participating in the review had not adopted special measures to support elderly women and widows despite the increased likelihood of older women being economically disadvantaged or widowed. The status of older women in different world regions is explored in the Report of an International Expert Group Meeting on the Integration of Ageing and Elderly Women in Development, held in Vienna in October 1991 (organized jointly by the United Nations and the American Association of Retired Persons). A study entitled "The Situation of Elderly Women: Available Statistics and Indicators" (published in January 1993 jointly by the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat) can assist States and organizations wishing to introduce programmes and projects for improving the status of older women.

78. As part of its Programme on Employment and Migration, ILO continues to consider the situation of international and internal migrants. A recent ILO publication, entitled Migration (Geneva, 1992), indicated that, among labour-exporting countries in Asia, women constitute the majority of migrants from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia and that they work mainly as domestics, entertainers and nurses. The recent ILO International Forum on Equality for Women in the World of Work identified several strategies for improving the status of female migrants. These include the provision of relevant information to women prior to migration and the extension of national labour legislation to cover migrant workers in their host countries. Networks should be formed by migrant women to protect their interests, supported by NGOs and trade unions.

79. An external evaluation of the implementation of UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Women in the past year confirmed that progress had been made in different field offices. To accelerate implementation, the evaluation stressed the importance of allocating additional resources to address the needs of refugee women, the integration of refugee women's issues into emergency response procedures, the development of a gender-based needs assessment and increased focus on physical protection and expanded gender training.

80. Various steps have already been taken to address these points, and increased emphasis has been placed on field visits to monitor, encourage and support implementation.

81. In 1993, the gender training course, "People Oriented Planning" (POP) was offered in 22 sessions with around 500 participants, including staff from UNHCR and implementing partners in various countries. NGO staff who have been trained as trainers by UNHCR are now conducting their own POP training, further increasing coverage. POP has also been integrated into UNHCR training programmes such as Programme Management, Emergency Management and Protection. In addition to English, French and Spanish, training materials are now available in Khmer, Portuguese and Russian. A new programme handbook, designed to guide staff in using the gender analytic framework in their daily work, has been made available. The focus of training in 1994 will be the development of an indigenous training capacity, which is expected to make POP training more accessible in isolated areas of some UNHCR operations.

82. An emergency stand-by arrangement providing for the rapid deployment of Community Services Officers is expected to address the needs of women in the earliest stages of a refugee crisis. A needs assessment tool with a gender focus is nearing completion.

83. Following reports on the implementation of the Guidelines on Protection of Refugee Women, UNHCR prepared a paper on "Some Aspects of Sexual Violence and Refugee Women" which was positively received by the Executive Committee and resulted in substantive recommendations to prevent and address these problems. These were subsequently reflected in discussions and recommendations by the Commission on the Status of Women and discussed in the joint UNHCR/NGO Partnership in Action (PARINAC) initiative as activities for future implementation. A project addressing particular aspects of sexual violence against refugee women in terms of prevention and follow-up care of victims has been developed and will be observed carefully as a possible model to address similar situations.

84. In preparation for the 1995 World Conference on Women, an extensive network has been developed among Headquarters and field personnel to ensure the necessary coordination. These staff will be contributing information on refugee women for the compilation of national reports, and will be ensuring that issues relevant to refugee women are raised in the preparatory conferences and in the discussion of the Platform for Action.

85. Around half the world's refugees are children. The High Commissioner is concerned that the special needs of refugee children are met through appropriate protection and assistance measures. The International Year of the Family (1994) provides an excellent opportunity to focus attention on the needs of refugee children.

86. A UNHCR Policy on Refugee Children (EC/SCP/82) was presented to the Executive Committee in 1993; it stressed the importance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as a normative framework for action. In all action taken concerning refugee children, the best interests of the child

are to be given primary consideration and family unity must be preserved or restored.

87. UNHCR's approach to the protection and care of refugee children has three elements: direct services to the child; helping the child through helping the family; and assisting the child and the family through services to the community.

88. The Guidelines on Refugee Children (A/AC.96/804), introduced in 1988, were reviewed in 1993 in the light of experience gained, as well as of new developments. A draft was circulated amongst Field Offices, implementing partners and relevant agencies within the United Nations systems for comments, and a new version of the Guidelines was distributed in May 1994.

89. Two areas of particular concern to UNHCR are the nutritional well-being of refugee children and their access to education. The most important factor in predisposing refugee children against high mortality during an emergency is to provide adequate food rations. A new Memorandum of Understanding between the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR was recently signed, where a number of provisions aim to improve the health and nutritional status of refugee children. In 1993 the education budget of UNHCR stood at $45 million, including $12 million funded as a result of Special Appeals and through the Emergency Fund. Two concrete examples highlight recent efforts to provide refugee children with education, even in emergency situations. In collaboration with UNICEF, UNESCO and other organizations, UNHCR supported primary and secondary schooling for displaced and refugee children in the former Yugoslavia. This collaboration was also evident in Somalia, where teaching materials developed for UNESCO's "Education for Peace" initiative were used for Somali refugees in countries of asylum, as well as for UNHCR's cross-border operations in Somalia.

90. Children's needs in refugee emergencies are now being assessed with the help of special stand-by arrangements with the NGO, Radda Barnen. These arrangements are designed to ensure that trained community services workers participate in emergency teams which are fielded at the outset of a refugee situation. In the context of a community approach, the needs of refugee children, and especially those of unaccompanied children, will be assessed and addressed. During 1993, community workers participated in emergencies in countries such as Liberia, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

91. In November 1993, UNIFEM signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNHCR, committing both organizations to closer cooperation, and to increasing international awareness of the plight of women refugees. The agreement is an outcome on inter-agency collaboration, beginning with the Expert Group Meeting on Refugee Women and Children. The meeting was convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women and attended by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, UNHCR and UNIFEM in Vienna in July 1990, in preparation for the priority theme, "Refugees and Displaced Women and Children", of the thirty-fifth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in February/ March 1991. UNHCR and UNIFEM have been coordinating their efforts so that refugee and displaced women have greater access to relief, repatriation and development assistance programmes. UNIFEM is supporting skills training and income-generating projects for refugee women returning to their places of origin

in Central America and Africa. In 1993, UNIFEM developed the "African Women in Crisis Umbrella Programme" to respond to the urgent need for assistance to a growing number of refugee women and children in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

92. Through its close association with UNDP, UNIFEM has been able to contribute to the development of the Disaster Management Programme and its operational guidelines. UNIFEM is funding a post in the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to ensure that United Nations policy consider women's needs and voice.

93. In 1993, the Fund initiated its Women's Human Rights Programme. In conjunction with Canada and the Netherlands, UNIFEM funded women's participation in the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June 1993. UNIFEM convened a pre-conference seminar, which proposed strategies for ending violence against women. As a result of women's participation at the World Conference, the issue of women's human rights was included in the final document for the first time.

## D. Sustainable development

94. In paragraph 12 of its resolution 48/108, the General Assembly welcomed the recommendations adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development on women, environment and development in all programme areas, in particular those set out in chapter 24 of Agenda 21, entitled "Global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development". It also urged organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations to ensure active participation of women in the planning and implementation of programmes for sustainable development.

95. According to chapter 7 of Agenda 21, the role of women should be enhanced. There would be no sustainable human settlement development without the active, often invisible role of women. Women have been, and are, participants and leaders in civil society. Through their struggle for a better, healthier living environment for their families, they have created organizations to fight for the right to housing, clean water, environmentally safe energy, personal security and community services such as schools, health clinics and cultural centres. As a result, women have gained recognition and empowerment.

96. The report of the Secretary-General on effective mobilization for development noted that a necessary condition for achieving sustainable development is the advancement of women (A/48/393, para. 50). It has been widely demonstrated that, when women achieve equality with men, they contribute to an improvement of the environment as well as social, political and economic life. Gender equality and sustainable development must be attained through the self-empowerment of women, a process in which women learn of their rights and assert them at the household, community, national and international levels. Gender equality involves modifying the gender roles of men, a redistribution of the reproductive and productive work so that it is shared evenly, and reforming private and public institutions.

97. The report suggested that the review of Agenda 21 of the Commission on Sustainable Development should include indicators of progress towards sustainable development based on gender relations and analyse the ways these relations influence environmental concerns. In order to fully understand the links between gender and sustainable development, research should be conducted on the complex interaction between environmental and socio-economic factors, including gender relations. Research should focus on the links between gender, access to education and employment, resource allocation and distribution, health and the environment.

98. In the reports presented to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its second session, mention was made of women as one of the major groups. However, the role and contribution of women was not discussed outside that context. The most important environmental issues for concern have been identified as the need to distribute environmental resources within the household and within society between the rich and poor, with particular attention to the entitlement and access to these resources, including ownership of land, by women; the need to address the marginalization of women resulting from technology in general and the Green Revolution in particular; the need to recognize women as the custodians of traditional knowledge and practices; and the need to promote greater gender sensitivity in both men and women, particularly in relation to national legislation.

99. UNESCO is underlining the importance of the cultural dimension of development, and is presently preparing a publication on "Women, Culture and Development".

100. The development of databases with gender-specific indicators should be pursued. Educational materials on the state of the environment should be prepared for reflecting the contribution of women as custodians of traditional skills and knowledge and natural resource managers, highlighting their concern for a diverse set of environmental issues including pollution, deforestation, solid waste and hazardous waste management in both a rural and urban environmental context.

101. The contribution of women in industry, i.e. the manufacturing sector, to the overall socio-economic development of their countries cannot be overemphasized. There are about 200 million women in the world who work either as workers or entrepreneurs in this sector. As one of the major groups instrumental for sustainable development, women should be empowered legally and economically so that they can participate in and benefit from development on an equal basis as men. A non-discriminatory enabling environment in the private sector allowing women to undertake productive ventures, sub-sector specific technical training as well as entrepreneurship development programmes supported by credit facilities would improve substantially women's contribution to sustainable development.

102. The role of rural women as major actors in sustainable agricultural production, natural resource management and food security will require more than stated acknowledgement but establishment of specific mechanisms, ranging from the legal to the technological, to ensure their access to social and economic

benefits from national and international policies and programmes in rural development.

103. ILO has prepared a Briefing Note on Women in Environment and Development. Furthermore, it is finalizing a special discussion booklet highlighting the importance of integrating a gender perspective into all environment and sustainable development activities. The booklet is designed to facilitate group discussion by women and men in both developing and developed countries.

104. ILO has also launched several pilot projects dealing with women, the environment and sustainable development. Projects in Bangladesh and Ghana disseminate technologies to women's groups which are environmentally safe and which create employment, empower women, reduce workloads, and diminish poverty. In India, two pilot projects have strengthened rural women's organizations and enabled women to collectively regenerate environmentally degraded land, thereby promoting employment, reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development. The pilot experiences in India have led to policy discussions at the national level, as summarized in the publication, Women and Wasteland Development in India. The monograph sheds light on the impact of environmental degradation on women and presents varied experiences of women's participation in wasteland development and recommends policies and measures to increase women's access to and control over wasteland and forests.

105. In keeping with the UNIFEM strategy towards the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 and Agenda 21, UNIFEM has continued to raise awareness for women, environment and development (WED) at the decision-making level and has strengthened operational activities at the grass-roots level. UNIFEM has assisted UNDP in integrating gender in the Capacity 21 Programme.

106. In May 1993, the Fund published the "UNIFEM Gender, Environment and Development Guide", providing technical guidelines to strengthen gender, environment and development components in all phases of the project cycle. In October 1993, UNIFEM co-sponsored a three-day international consultation on "Women and Ecosystem Management", with the Inter-American Development Bank, UNDP and the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) convened by UNEP and the World Bank.

107. In preparation for the First Global United Nations Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SD/SIDS), held in Barbados in July 1994, UNIFEM, with funding from Sweden, sponsored subregional conferences, where the SD/SIDS draft Programme of Action was reviewed and modified. As a result, gender specific recommendations were incorporated into the final Programme of Action document. At the parallel NGO Forum in Barbados, the Fund also supported the Women's Tent, a workshop on "Women and Sustainable Development" organized by DAWN/WAND, and a two-day "Women and Environment" workshop organized by the WorldWIDE Network of Women in the Environment.

## E. Public information

108. In paragraph 18 of its resolution 48/108, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide for the existing weekly radio programmes on women in the regular budget of the United Nations, making adequate provisions for broadcasts in different languages, and to develop the focal point for issues relating to women in the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, which, in concert with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development should provide a more effective public information programme relating to the advancement of women.

109. During the past 12 months, the activities of the Department of Public Information relating to the advancement of women have focused on publicizing preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women and the issues to be addressed by the Conference. The public information strategy for the Conference, reported on in last year's report of the Secretary-General, is being implemented, and a Departmental Focal Point has been established within the Division for Promotion and Public Services to coordinate departmental activities. The Department is also coordinating information activities of the United Nations system relating to the Conference through the mechanism of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC) for which the Department acts as secretariat. The worldwide network of 67 United Nations Information Centres (UNIC) have been alerted to the importance of publicizing the preparatory process for the Conference and in generating interest and awareness at the national level of the issues to be addressed by it. Many UNICs have already undertaken activities to promote the Conference, including the production and distribution of informational material in local languages, utilizing seed money provided by the Department for that purpose. Copies of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Declaration on Violence against Women are being distributed in all six official languages, along with special information products such as press releases, backgrounders and fact sheets.

110. The Department's 15-minute radio programme, "Women", continues to be produced weekly in English and distributed to 400 radio stations worldwide, and twice monthly in Arabic, French and Spanish, distributed to 500 radio stations globally.

## Notes

1/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. I, sect. A.

2/ See I. Parikh, "Perspectives on Training Women Managers in Africa", ILO Training Discussion Papers, No. 75, Geneva, 1991.

3/ See E. Date-Bah, "Women's Empowerment in Trade Unions: Recent Data from the ILO Interdepartmental Project on Equality for Women in Employment", Labour Education, 90, 1993/1, ILO, Geneva.

4/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1991, Supplement No. 8 (E/1991/28).

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